

ICCW

**SPECIAL
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**February 29, 2008
and 2012**

Free Speech

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Food for Thought

— Barbara Bessey

I have recently become very aware as ICCW's Vice Chair that if I ever had opinions about women's issues, I never voiced them or acted upon them.

Without telling my exact age, I will say that I am in my 40's. I don't know if it was because I grew up in a family that my mother was dominant in a very quiet manner, a rural state, insecure about myself or what. I spent most of my 30's in a very metropolitan area, but, was so focused on working full time and going to college to get my BA that I just didn't pay attention to women's issues. I commend women in their 20's and 30's today that many be starting early to get involved. Maybe it was a true maturity that I had to grow into or maybe it has been the friends that I have made in state

government. I worked for private law firms in the past, so these last two years in state government have shown to me the other side of the coin.

The Human Rights Bureau is reporting that pregnancy discrimination is on the rise again in Montana, and all across the country from my research. Also, age and disability discrimination, and retaliation are still very high against women and men. I think most human beings really do want better relationships with their families, friends, co-workers, and supervisors. Is chivalry dead? Is "love thy neighbor" difficult? Is respect and common courtesy a thing of the past?

As we are in the midst of a presidential election year, it is quite

evident that the United States needs change. The potential of great changes is magnanimous. We have our first woman and African-American candidates.

Let's hope that whoever wins the election, Republican or Democrat, that government helps families, the elderly, the poor, small businesses, and our natural resources prosper.

We need so many different types of changes in our lives, society, and the world. We are living in the 21st century where war has dominated the news, prisons are over crowded, reality shows dominate the TV, and 19 years of litigation to reduce the punitive damages for the Exxon Valdez oil spill. It's not Christmas, but, remember: Peace on earth and goodwill towards men and women.

This is a Leap Year!

February has 29 days in it this year. Anyone actually born on the 29th can officially celebrate their birthday once every 4 years. It is also known it as "Sadie Hawkins Day", when a lady may make a proposal of marriage to a gentleman.

February is American Heart Month and Black History Month to name a couple. The 2nd is

Ground Hog Day and we are supposedly going to have 6 more weeks of winter. The 6th is *Lame Duck Day* for anyone that is holding an elected official position. If you know a "Lame Duck": supporters should provide recognition and support; non-supporters should cut them a little slack this day. The 17th is "Random Acts of Kindness Day". The creator or origina-

tor has never been determined. Beware that Random Acts of Kindness are contagious! The 18th is Presidents Day in celebration of Abraham Lincoln's Birthday, which is the 12th and George Washington's Birthday, which is the 22nd.



Celebrating Women

Passionate is the only word to describe this lady, Katharine Kountz, Bureau Chief for the Montana Human Rights Bureau (HRB). She was born and raised in Montana, but left to attend college and work. She worked in nontraditional jobs in the mining industry before becoming the director of the Woman's Resource Center in Dillon, where she dealt with issues of domestic violence. As an employment counselor in Bozeman, Kountz realized that her passion was in the arena of civil rights. She first took a part-time job as an investigator for the HRB, and later

became full time as the first outstationed employee for 15 years. In 2002, Kountz was promoted to Bureau Chief.

Kountz has been successful in providing education and outreach to Montana businesses as well as enforcement regarding discrimination laws. Kountz believes an employer's best investment is in its employees. She has provided mediation training to all Bureau investigators in an effort to help them grow and provide better service to customers of the HRB.

Kountz explained her philosophy of

helping employees grow, and that she expects good employees to move on and continue to grow. Some employees return to the Bureau with new skills and some go on to be "ambassadors" for the HRB in the private sector.

In a recent workshop, Kountz was asked, what brings her peace. She responded what brings her piece, (besides good chocolate) is knowing that her work can impact people's lives in a positive way.

Kountz resides with her husband of 31 years of marriage, their yellow lab, Willow and Taz the cat. She finds joy as a glass artist.

"Go Red" Campaign

On February 5, 2008 at the Old Supreme Court Chambers, representatives from DPHHS Cardiovascular Health Program invited representatives of various local organizations to attend and gather information to spread the word about women and heart disease and stroke. Speakers included Kim Pappas (Missoula) a heart disease survivor; Lisa Michael (Bozeman) a stroke survivor; and Kathy Belling (Helena) a heart attack survivor, who all told their stories and described some of the

warning signs that medical doctors dismissed as some other ailment. Females, in general, have poorer outcomes following a heart attack than do males: 38% of females who have a heart attack die within one year, compared with 25% of males. Approximately only one-third of females and males participate in cardiac rehabilitation following a heart attack. These are astonishing statistics. It seems that women take better care of their careers and their families than taking care of themselves.

JP Pomnichowski, a State Legislator in the House of Representatives also spoke. She is an EMT, who is trying to spread the message that Montana needs more volunteer EMTs to be available in our communities. Incentives to employers who support their employees to become EMT volunteers may be a key. EMTs may be the person that really saves a heart attack victim's life.

For more information, please visit:
www.dphhs.mt.gov/PHSD/cardiovascular/cardio-index.shtml and
www.americanheart.org.

"I went from being a successful businesswoman, to just total devastation, emotionally and financially."

- Kathy Belling

Helena Parents Push for Fair Pay Restoration Act

— Mary Ann Dunwell

A group of Helena-area parents is advocating for passage of national legislation that would protect workers from unlawful pay discrimination. The MomCorps group has been communicating with district staff of U.S. Senators Max Baucus and Jon Tester to muster support for the Fair Pay Restoration Act.

The Fair Pay Restoration Act, SB 1843, is making its way through the

Senate. Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2007, HB 2831, passed the House of Representatives in July. The legislation would reinstate a previous law making clear that pay discrimination claims accrue whenever a discriminatory pay decision or practice is conducted or when a person is affected by the decision or practice.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Ledbetter vs. Goodyear Tire & Rubber*

Co. dealt a near-fatal blow to a woman's ability to use Title VII of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 to remedy pay discrimination based on sex, race, national origin, and other protected grounds.

MomCorps is a local group of people who are also members of the national MomsRising organization. For more information, visit www.momsrising.org



"Politics should be the part-time profession of every citizen who would protect the rights and privileges of free people and who would preserve what is good and fruitful in our national heritage"

— Lucille Ball

Attorney General Candidate Forum

On February 20, 2008, ICCW co-sponsored a Candidate Forum with the State Bar of Montana, Public Law Section held at the Great Northern Hotel. This was a non-partisan forum with the Attorney General candidates: Steve Bullock, Lee Bruner, Tim Fox, John Parker and Mike Wheat. Moderator was John Connor of the State Attorney General's Office. Candidates were asked five questions that were sub-



mitted prior to the forum, topics of which included: top three objectives as the AG; public service and legal background; how active regarding environmental and natural resource issues; perspective regarding relationship between AG and the Governor; and Montana's express constitutional right to privacy. Questions from the

audience included: prisons due to meth epidemic and criminal crisis; management/CEO leadership styles; experience with tribal & state jurisdictions; and access to public lands/waters. Attendance was estimated at approximately 60-70 persons. The Candidates mingled freely prior to and after the forum. The Candidates have been asked to attend the 2008 Candidate Forum to be held on May 6, 2008 at the Staggering Ox.

Save the Date!

Upcoming Events

Various subcommittees are working on or supporting the following events:

Big Brothers and Big Sisters has scheduled the 6th annual Wine Crush for

March 15, 2008 at the Helena Civic Center from 6:00pm to 11:00 pm. Advance tickets are \$60.00/\$70.00 at the door. Included in the ticket price is a Riedel tasting glass, all tasting wine, microbrews, Hors



d'oeuvres, music by Mark Hutchinson Jazz Quartet, silent auction and an exclusive live auction.

Events Subcommittee: 2008 Candidate Forum to be held on May 6, 2008 at the Staggering Ox from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM prior to Montana's primary election in June. The candidates, depending on the number that will be in attendance, will be able to give a brief synopsis of their positions and then answer questions. Refreshments will be served.

Work-Life Balance Subcom-

mittee: Women's Health Fair is scheduled for May 14, 2008 in the Capitol Rotunda. Race for the Cure is scheduled for May 17, 2008 to start on the Capitol Campus.

The Excellence in Leadership Awards ceremony is scheduled for May 21, 2008 at the Capitol in Room 317. Lt. Governor Bohlinger will be presenting the awards. Details with regard to the nomination packets will be forthcoming.

Stay tuned for additional information regarding ICCW events.

Training Resources

Last year about this time, ICCW sponsored a showing of the Motherhood Manifesto at the Myrna Loy Center. One of ICCW's members graciously donated five copies of Motherhood Manifesto to our training library.

The Motherhood Manifesto documentary is a funny, fascinat-

ing, informative, and finally infuriating film about motherhood in America. At the end of this one, you'll want to jump out of your seat, rush out the door, and start demanding change immediately!"

— Ann Crittenden, author, *The Price of Motherhood*.

"Beautifully shot, incredible, well researched content. It had me

laughing, crying, mad, sad but most of all MOTIVATED."

— Cooper Munroe, business owner.

Narrated by Academy Award-winning actress Mary Steenburgen, the film shows dramatically just how far behind all other industrial countries the US lags in its support of families.

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Creating positive change for all state employees by promoting the full participation of women in state government.



Tentative Schedule for 2007-2008 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM And Other Events

March 15, 2008	BBBS Wine Crush
March 20, 2008	Mitchell, Room 136
April 17, 2008	Walt Sullivan, Room 104
May 6, 2008	2008 Candidate Forum
May 17, 2008	Race for the Cure
May 21, 2008	ELA, Capitol, Room 317
June 19, 2008	DEQ, Room 112

General Meetings will occur for the first 30 minutes of business. Subcommittee meetings will occur for the remaining 1 hour. Please make plans to attend the 1 1/2 hour session.

Send stories or leads to
bbessey@mt.gov

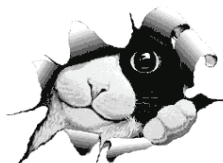
Pet Adoption Month

February is Pedigree Pet Adoption Month. Every dog or cat that finds itself in a shelter has a story. The goal is to help make sure that those stories have happy endings. As a society, it is our responsibility to protect and improve the lives of abused, abandoned, and homeless cats and dogs. We must find permanent loving homes. After Katrina hit Louisiana, it has been an awakening that our pets deserve the same considerations when it comes to evacuations — too many pets were left behind even when the owners tried to stay behind longer than they should have.

Most people prefer puppies and kittens. However, older dogs and cats also make wonderful pets. Most dogs reach their senior years around 7 or 8. Veterinarians consider all dogs more than 10 years old to be geriatric. Cats become geriatric at 12.

Pets age as humans do. Their hair turns gray (they don't have hair color as we do), they lose muscle tone (they could use a gym membership as we do), their senses dull (Ay, what ya say!), and they are prone to joint problems and arthritis (they cannot use a cane).

They experience digestive upset more often, their bathroom habits may change, and some lose bladder control. Pets can also develop kidney and liver disease, diabetes, hyperthyroidism, and cancer.



Some pets grow crotchety, other clingy. Aging pets typically play less,

react more slowly, and nap often. They are less tolerant of temperature fluctuations, changes in routine, and

active children. Some act depressed, and a few suffer from cognitive dysfunction syndrome, a condition similar to Alzheimer's disease.

Many of these changes are gradual and tough to spot, but a veterinarian can point out age-related behaviors you may overlook, which is why regular medical exams are important.

Young or older pets do wonders to help their human companions deal with difficult situations in life, provide unconditional love and devotion, and provide companionship like no other. All they need is a warm, loving, and caring home.



Please consider giving to your local shelter, humane association or adopting a pet.

Sources: www.pedigree.com and
www.2ndchancepets.net/education